

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Regulation amendments to change the required Program of Studies (Incorporated by reference in 704 KAR 3:303) (Program of Studies draft under separate cover)

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 156.070, 156.160, 158.645 and 6451, 160.290

History/Background:

Existing Policy. The General Assembly and the Kentucky Board of Education have established and implemented high standards for all students in Kentucky. KRS 158.645 and KRS 158.6451 set forth the capacities and goals that frame, along with the Academic Expectations, what students should know and be able to do as the result of their public education experiences. Recently, the Kentucky Board of Education asked the Department of Education to review and revise the *Core Content for Assessment* to ensure that the statements are clear and appropriately address national and world class educational standards. This revised version of the *Core Content for Assessment* is currently being used to develop items for field testing and is driving test development in anticipation of the 2006-2007 assessment cycle. The *Core Content for Assessment* is a subset of the *Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools, Grades Primary – 12*.

Other recent Board action includes making changes to the minimum requirements for high school graduation. These changes, in combination with adjustments to the *Core Content for Assessment*, require changes in the *Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools, Grades Primary-12*. The Board agreed that staff needed to move forward with revising the *Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools, Grades Primary-12*.

The *Program of Studies* outlines the minimum content standards required for all students for the required credits for high school graduation and the content standards for primary, intermediate, and middle level programs that lead up to the high school requirements. These content standards are based on Kentucky's learning goals, Academic Expectations and national standards. The *Program of Studies* was last reviewed in 1998.

Work to Date:

The Kentucky Department of Education released a request for proposals for assistance with the task of developing the revised *Program of Studies*. The Center for Assessment, a national not-for-profit organization accepted the challenge to work with Kentucky on this important initiative under a very short timeline. Karin Hess is heading up the Kentucky project for the Center for Assessment and will make a presentation at the February KBE meeting on the process and

progress. The Center for Assessment brings a deep understanding of the complexities of national content and performance standards through their work with Kentucky and 16 other states.

The Center's work with KDE on the *Program of Studies* has included:

- Consultation and ongoing planning with KDE staff regarding document format, alignment to predetermined national referents and Kentucky high school graduation requirements, and scope of *Program of Studies* revisions work.
- Review of information needed to implement the revisions and revision of Kentucky's *Program of Studies* in these areas: mathematics, science, English Language Arts (reading and writing), social studies, arts and humanities, and practical living/vocational studies. (Four content areas will be drafted for the February 2006 Board meeting; The Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies Program of Studies will be drafted during March-April 2006 and will be presented at the April Board meeting.)
- Written documentation for alignment to national referents identified by KDE and consultants (e.g., NAEP, Achieve's American Diploma Project Benchmarks for English Language Arts and mathematics, national content standards, etc.)
- Explanation of the draft revised *Program of Studies* for four (4) content areas to the Kentucky Board of Education in February 2006

The Process for Revising Kentucky's Program of Studies (POS)

1. **Content-Specific Guidance from KDE for Each Content Area:** The Center drafted questions for each content area and responses from KDE content consultants are being used to guide POS revision work. Questions included issues and gaps that needed to be addressed in the revisions, specific national referents that should be used to inform revisions, and suggestions for addressing content-specific technology and literacy connections. KDE content consultants used the information identified in their work on the revised *Core Content for Assessment*, feedback from the field and information from national initiatives to guide their responses to the questions.
2. **Developing a General Template:** In consultation with KDE content consultants, a general template for the POS in all content areas was created. The major difference between the 2005 POS template and the existing POS format is how content is organized. Two examples of the new organizational POS format include: using the Big Ideas of the content discipline found in the *Core Content for Assessment* (CCA) documents and not organizing high school by course titles. Example course descriptions will be developed to illustrate integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupation/technical and traditional models for organizing the content.

KDE consultants from each content area developed at least one sample of how the revised POS format might look if aligned to CCA (October 2005, version 4.0). These samples were reviewed by Karin Hess and the outside consultants and slightly modified further through the work with them in creating the first drafts.

Attached is an Annotated Sample Template using primary science.

3. **Developing statement(s) of Enduring Knowledge for each content discipline:** The concept of “enduring knowledge” or “enduring understandings” are found throughout the current national literature on curriculum and assessment as a means for planning meaningful instruction that answers “essential questions” of the discipline. Using guidance provided from KDE content consultants, statements of Enduring Knowledge have been established related to each organizing “Big Idea” of the content areas. Enduring Knowledge and the related understandings are made up of the concepts, principles, and theories that weave many facts into revealing and useful patterns. They involve the organizing priority ideas that enable us to make sense of past lessons, conduct current inquiry, and create new knowledge. Enduring Knowledge goes beyond discrete facts or skills to focus on larger concepts, principles, or processes. For example, students learn about the Magna Carta because of its significance to a larger idea - the rule of law, whereby written laws specify the limits of a government’s power and the rights of individual - and concepts such as due process. Enduring Knowledge statements are framed as generalizations that answer essential learning questions.
4. **Technology and Literacy Connections:** KDE staff originally suggested technology and literacy connections as a separate strand within each content area. The Center has recommended that the revised POS include technology and literacy connections as part of the Skills and Concepts section in the new POS format, rather than a separate section that is too generic to be meaningful to teachers in planning instruction. For example, in mathematics, a technology connection would include “Construct a scatter plot of a set of paired data and if it demonstrates a clear linear trend, use a graphing calculator to find the regression line that best fits this data”. A literary connection would include “Explain the impact of sampling methods, bias and the phrasing of questions asked during data collection and the conclusions that can rightfully be made.” POS introductions can also address the need for meaningful technology and literacy connections across content areas in a more general way. In addition to technology and literacy connections within the Skills and Concepts section of each content area, an additional section on technology specific to the standards required to meet the technological competency requirement for high school graduation will also be developed.
5. **Alignment to Kentucky Core Content for Assessment and national referents:** The Center began the revisions to POS by establishing the Enduring Knowledge statements related to the Big Ideas outlined in the CCA. Often language was taken from the CCA document to frame these ideas. Next, the related CCA assessment descriptors were used to develop the “Skills and Concepts” section of the template. The state-assessed skills and concepts (those in bold print in CCA) are included in the revised POS. The Center also used the current POS document, the KDE responses to our questions (described above in #1), the “supportive CCA” (those in italics), and national curriculum and assessment documents (e.g., NAEP Frameworks for science, mathematics, ELA, social studies; NCTM Standards for math, etc.) to build a cohesive curriculum document that provides instructional context, breadth, and depth for the CCA assessment benchmarks. For example, if the CCA states that students are expected to “describe a conceptual idea” for the state assessment, the revised POS language will include “describing the concept” but may add things like reading about the concept to answer student-generated questions (a

literacy connection), use technology to enhance learning the concepts (such as use tools for inquiry – technology connection), and explore the concept more deeply – “identify, describe, and analyze new applications for the given concept.”

6. **Ongoing process for KDE feedback:** As the Center’s outside consultants drafted the various content areas, Karin Hess reviewed their work and sent it on to KDE content consultants for feedback with questions and comments. Additionally, Center staff met with KDE content consultants the week of January 16th to review drafts and determine the need for further revisions to the content or format of the POS document. It was anticipated at the time of preparation of this staff note that the revisions will be completed the week of January 23rd in preparation for the KBE meeting February 1. Drafts will be provided to the Board under separate cover.

Policy Issue(s):

- What questions or advice does the KBE have as the *Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools, Grades Primary-12* is finalized?

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

Local Superintendents Advisory Council – A letter will come from this body expressing its input prior to the February meeting.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

Keeping instruction focused on the breadth and depth of content and student performance for Kentucky students in the 21st Century is essential in moving toward proficiency by 2014 and student success in their career and life choices including the military, work or postsecondary education.

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